Active Kids Healthy Kids

Proposed Vision and Goals for a Nova Scotia with Physically Active Children and Youth

NOVA SCOTIA
Sport and Recreation Commission

Active Kids
Healthy Kids

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Draft prepared by the Working Group on Physical Activity for Children and Youth.

September 2001

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One way to reach a desired goal is to imagine ourselves at the place we want to be and then look back to see how we got there.

The Working Group on Physical Activity for Children and Youth prepared this draft vision to help Nova Scotians see a future where fully half of our children and youth are physically active. We looked at conditions that would make that future a reality, and identified six key goals in which we need to achieve and measure results.

We invite your comments and suggestions.

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Proposed Vision

In the year 2010, Nova Scotia is known as a province that experienced a fundamental shift in its support for active, healthy lives for its children and youth.

Nova Scotia is a province where a culture of physical activity for young people flourishes. It is a culture where children, youth, and their families rediscovered and renewed the joy and fun that comes from being physically active every day. Physical activity is an important part of the daily lives of children and youth of this province. Communities, schools, and workplaces welcome and support a physically active lifestyle.

This change did not happen overnight.

In 2001, Nova Scotians recognized that, while some young people were very active, the majority were not, and something had to be done. Over the next 10 years Nova Scotians worked on six key goals to dramatically increase the physical activity levels of young people in the province.

Culture of Physical Activity

This vision of a culture of physical activity for young people is characterized by:

- More young people who are more active more often and in more places
- Families that encourage their children to be physically active from as early an age as possible
- Youth who are more responsible for their own physical activity and are role models for younger children
- Less sedentary time for children and youth and a corresponding increase in healthy weights
- More physical activity opportunities that are balanced among structured and unstructured; planned and spontaneous; competitive and non-competitive; youth-led versus adult-led
- Recognition of the value of physical activity for child health and well-being by all sectors including the media, schools, sport and recreation groups, parent associations, childcare agencies, municipal government, health service organizations and provincial government departments
- A commitment across these sectors demonstrated through supportive policies, resources, programs and services.

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Proposed Goals

Education

Goal: To educate and motivate children, youth, and their families to increase their levels of physical activity.

This means

- Children and youth are confident and motivated to be physically active, and have the skills and knowledge through active learning experiences in the home, at school, and in youth-serving organizations.
- Children and youth feel supported by peers, parents, teachers, coaches, and the media in their choice of physical activity.
- Older children and youth are involved in leadership roles to help younger children to be more physically active.
- Families are finding opportunities to be physically active.

Opportunities for All

Goal: To provide a range of opportunities for physical activity to all children and youth, regardless of gender, socio-economic status, disability, ethnic background or culture.

This means, on a daily basis, children and youth experience physical activity that

- is fun and safe, and offers a broad range of choices
- is inclusive of all children and youth
- is affordable
- is convenient and accessible in their communities
- takes place in active school communities that offer PD12 opportunities for quality physical education, lifetime activities, school sport, intramurals, and community access
- uses facilities and physical environments that are children- and youth-friendly, such as
  - their homes
  - their backyards
  - childcare settings
  - schools that are designed for community use seven days a week
  - their places of worship
  - the natural outdoor environment
  - community recreation facilities for youth
  - neighbourhood streets and pathways that are safe for walking, cycling, wheeling

Girls and Young Women

Goal: To increase the participation of girls and young women in physical activity.

This means

- recognizing that different approaches are needed to involve young girls, who are traditionally more physically inactive than boys

Leadership

Goal: To develop leadership capacity in physical activity involving both youth and adults in education, coaching, recreation, health, childcare, and youth work.

This means

- There are more volunteers and staff, in the schools and the community, trained and committed to health-enhancing physical activity.
- Youth are respected and involved as leaders in planning and policy.

Government and Community Commitment

Goal: To increase commitment to enjoyable, lifelong, health enhancing physical activity for young people by a wide variety of local, provincial, and national agencies.

A range of organizations at the local, provincial, and national levels are acting, by themselves and together, to define and increase support for physical activity for young people, with policies, resources, programs and services. Some of the key sectors that have acted, and examples of the steps they are taking, include the following:

- **Schools**
  Schools have increased their use of community resources to offer programs after school - a time when children and youth are most likely to be sedentary.

- **Municipalities**
  Municipalities play a leadership role in supporting and providing programs and facilities for physical recreation.

- **Sport, recreation, and cultural organizations and/or youth-serving organizations**
  To improve the health benefits of physical activity for young people these groups have adapted rules and regulations that minimize the amount of sedentary time in practices and games.

- **Health-serving organizations**
  Health agencies include education on physical activity in their efforts on youth health issues, such as nutrition, anti-tobacco, safe sex campaigns.

- **Media**
  Radio, television, and newspaper develop and spread physical activity messages.

- **Provincial government departments**
  Transportation policy recognizes that young people need to be physically active and promote safe use of streets for active modes of transportation, such as cycling, walking, and wheeling.

- **Corporate**
  Workplaces offer on-site day care with lots of physical activity opportunities for young children.

- **Unions**
  Unions opt for contracts that reflect support for physical activity in schools, workplaces, and communities.

Research

Goal: To support and communicate research into interventions to increase the levels of physical activity among all children and youth.

This means

- An ongoing system to monitor physical activity participation rates and patterns in young people.
- This information is used to develop strategies and target resources.
- Evaluation is used to measure the impacts of interventions, and best practices are widely promoted.

Achieving the Vision

To achieve our vision of a culture of physical activity, Nova Scotia must develop strategies and measure progress in the following goals.

Education

Goal: To educate and motivate children, youth, and their families to increase their levels of physical activity.

Opportunities for All

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